



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Green Thumbs at Work Garden Grant Winners Announced



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RUTLAND – Employees at Carris Reels-Plastics Division in Rutland are already pining for that first bite of fresh tomato from their soon-to-be planted garden this summer.

The company received a Green Thumbs Community Garden grant from the Vermont Department of Health.

"We thought a garden would be a great addition to our Health and Wellness program," said Patricia Blake, site manager for Carris Plastics. "Our hope is to also be able to offer an activity to get our employees outside and doing some exercising, as well as enjoying that first ripe tomato. Nothing beats that taste."

Other Green Thumbs at Work garden grant winners are Community Health Centers of the Rutland Region, Hickok & Boardman Financial Planning in Burlington, Milton CAT in Richmond, NEKCA Head Start in Barton, Sunrise Family Resource Center in Bennington, Transportation Security Administration in North Clarendon, and Washington Electric Coop in East Montpelier.

They will each receive \$500 for materials, a \$250 gift certificate to Gardener's Supply, and \$1,000 in technical assistance. The grant program is a partnership of the Vermont Department of Health, Vermont Community Garden Network, Charlie Nardozi, and Gardener's Supply.

The grant winners were selected from a pool of 29 applicants based on readiness to develop a workplace garden, including the existence of a wellness coordinator or wellness committee, the ability to provide matching funds and in-kind services for garden development, employee participation, and clearly established wellness goals.

The technical assistance provided through the grant program helps each workplace determine the type and size of garden that best meets its needs, and develop strategies to ensure the garden will be successful throughout the 2015 season and for years to come.

Carris Reels-Plastics is 100 percent employee-owned and has nine manufacturing plants (Canada, U.S. and Mexico) combined with eight warehouse locations.

"Though the garden will be located physically at the Carris Plastics building, we offer the project to all of our employee owners from our other Rutland sites," Blake said. "Our goal is that this will be a starting point for more gardens in the future. We are always looking for ways to support and increase employee participation, especially those who don't have the opportunity to grow their own garden."

For more information, go to <http://vcgn.org/green-thumbs-at-work> or call (802) 861-4769.

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